



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

amount that was incorrectly rendered. Here the Translation Method Schools had the highest score in all three years, and it is upon this score that Mr. Brown bases his claims for that method; but it may well be questioned whether it is better to translate a larger amount on such a test than to get what is translated more nearly correct.

Mr. Brown points to the "exact source of the failure" in Latin, and implies that his tests support his contention. That this is not a reasonable claim will be clear from the mere quotation of his statement of the causes of failure (137):

... (1) lack of adaptation of the subject as now taught to the needs of adolescent youth; (2) absence of the application of well-recognized principles of administration and pedagogy; (3) poor choice of the Latin material constituting the content of the course.

In another place (121) he writes:

Our present methods in Latin are not succeeding well with more than a quarter of our pupils and the chief reason is the failure to break away from traditional practices and apply the principles of modern scientific supervision and administration.

Whatever allowance is made for defects in the tests, there can be no doubt that the showing for Latin remains entirely unsatisfactory; but there is nothing in Mr. Brown's facts to warrant him in offering a program of reform as other than a personal contribution to the solution of the problem. Despite all my strictures, I believe that Latin teachers can find something of profit in this contribution. I single out as deserving of especial consideration the emphasis Mr. Brown puts upon the training of pupils to get the meaning of Latin, upon the teaching of functional grammar, and upon reading for the thought.

THE PHILLIPS EXETER ACADEMY

JOHN C. KIRTLAND

THE ANCIENT FISH-TABOO

In *The Classical Journal* 17.226 (January, 1922), Professor John A. Scott attempted to account for the interdict imposed on the use of fish according to the ritual of the goddess Cybele, which is discussed by Julian the Apostate in his declamation on the Mother of the Gods. Professor Scott takes the stand that this prohibition arises from the fact that the fish in the rivers of Phrygia, where the cult of Cybele originated, are—and presumably were also in ancient times—of an altogether unpalatable and unwholesome nature.

The question of the psychology of the primitive mind and the interpretation of early beliefs and practices are matters of extreme complexity. The science of folk-lore is, relatively speaking, yet in its infancy. Nevertheless, this study has been rewarded by the discovery of several very important principles. Thus, it has been shown more clearly, year by year, by sociologists and anthropologists that the primitive taboo is not, as once was supposed, concerned with any considerations of utility or expediency. Rather, the taboo is applied as the outcome of a perverse and childish system of reasoning, with which the magical

and the occult are hopelessly blended. Indeed, it appears to be quite impossible for the primitive man to differentiate the material from the supernatural; hence taboo and kindred elements arise simply from a perverted philosophy. In other words, we may expect to find no logic—according to our ideas of the term—in the mind of the savage. A pair of examples, which happen to involve the fish-taboo, will suffice to illustrate.

It was formerly the custom among the Nootka Indians of British Columbia, Canada, to abstain entirely from the eating of fish for a period of two months after they had partaken of bear-meat. Now the fish of this region are, undoubtedly, as fine as any to be found in the world; and the abstinence on the part of the Indians, we learn, had nothing to do with any fear of evil results attending a mixed diet of fish and bear's flesh. They candidly explained the taboo as arising from a concern lest the salmon and the cod should get word of their action and, being offended thereat, should refuse in the future to enter the net or take the bait (see Sir J. G. Frazer, *The Golden Bough*, *Spirits of the Corn and of the Wild*, 2.251). The fish was taboo among the Abipones of Paraguay on the ground that it is a delicate, defenceless creature and as such would produce cowardice and sloth in those who partook of it. On the other hand, for reasons obvious enough, the Abipones were much addicted to a diet consisting of the tough, rank meat of jaguars (Frazer, 141).

Furthermore, it is clearly demonstrable that the priest places the taboo, not upon that which is unpleasant or abhorred by the barbarian, but upon just the opposite. The ban is placed upon what is *per se* pleasurable or on that which seems likely, humanly speaking, to confer a benefit. In other words, the taboo is applied for some supposedly far-seeing and supernatural reason. Likewise it is manifestly a work of supererogation to place an interdict on any act of which the evil consequences are immediately and pointedly obvious.

If, then, we assume, with Professor Scott, that the rivers of Phrygia in ancient, as well as in modern, times were filled with fish both unpalatable and unwholesome, it seems impossible to understand why any ban on fish-eating should have been thought necessary. The Phrygians must surely have avoided a fish-diet from the very nature of the circumstances, and both the principles outlined above would militate strongly against the supposition of there being any necessity for a specific taboo. It would therefore appear altogether unlikely that Professor Scott's theory would be accepted by any anthropologist or student of comparative religion.

While speculation in a field of this sort is extremely hazardous, it may be possible, I think, to suggest an alternative theory for this taboo occurring in the ritual of Cybele. While the ancient Phrygia in which this cult arose did not entirely coincide, geographically, with the later Roman territory, it is certain that the Phrygians were essentially a people of the highlands, cut off from intercourse with the sea during most of

their history, and in early times greatly influenced by the Hittites, who may be said to have been to an even greater extent denizens of the uplands and of the hills. Cybele too—notwithstanding the fact that Apollonius Rhodius (*Argonautica* 1.1098) in one place characterizes her as having dominion over the air and the waters as well as over the land—was originally a deity of the soil itself, a goddess of mountains and caves, who delighted in the fruits of the field (*Argonautica* 1.1140 ff.). Hence, the Phrygians may have feared and even hated the sea, and the primitive Earth Mother may long have refused to be associated with the ocean. This dislike could have been most readily made manifest by a taboo on fish—the fruits of the sea. There are many instances on record of hatred of the salt-water by inland peoples. According to Frazer, the Basutos have an instinctive horror of the ocean, although they have never seen it. Furthermore, he says (*Golden Bough, Taboo and the Perils of the Soul*, 10),

When the Indians of the Peruvian Andes were sent by the Spaniards to work in the hot valleys of the coast, the vast ocean which they saw before them as they descended the Cordillera was dreaded by them as a cause of disease. . . . Similarly the inland people of Lampong in Sumatra are said to pay a kind of adoration to the sea, and to make it an offering of cakes and sweetmeats when they behold it for the first time, deprecating its power to do them mischief.

Most suggestive, too, is the statement of Plutarch (*Isis et Osiris* 32) concerning the attitude of the Egyptian priests towards the sea. So great was their repugnance to it that they would not converse with seafaring men, and they refused to eat salt or *fish*—emblems of the ocean. The likeness of a fish served as the hieroglyphic symbol for 'hatred'. It seems probable, I think, that the same principle was operative in the case of Cybele, and that this primitive taboo persisted long after the goddess had become the all-embracing Great Mother of the terrestrial globe.

In the same article, Professor Scott further says:

In this *Journal* XII, 328, I tried to prove that the Homeric antipathy to fish was due to the fact that the fish in the streams around Smyrna make very poor food and that the Homeric poetry reflects the feelings or dislikes of a man from Smyrna.

The subject he elaborates in his *Unity of Homer*, 6 f., where he attempts to prove the Smyrnaean origin of Homer. Here we have the remark:

. . . yet in Homer the heroes spurned fish and the two passages which describe the eating of that food add the pardoning phrase, 'for they were on the verge of starvation'.

The question involved here calls, manifestly, for some different explanation from the former, unless indeed we are to believe that the maritime peoples of Asia Minor bore towards the sea a feeling of love not unmingled with hate and fear, an echo of which we might discern in the words of the writer of the Book of Revelation, 31.1, relative to the New Heaven and the New Earth. But this would be carrying assumption too far. The Smyrnaeans, however, must surely have known a great deal more about salt-water fish

than about fresh-water fish. As anyone who has lived on the sea-coast knows, the maritime peoples concern themselves little with the products of the streams of the hinterland—with such exceptions, to be sure, as we might find in the case of the great salmon-rivers of British Columbia. The fresh-water fish of Asia Minor are worthless; but the people of Smyrna had the Aegean at their front door. Why scorn fish in the mass when a few were unsound?

Although the Homeric *heroes* may have turned up their noses at this diet, we hear a good deal, nevertheless, about fish and fishing in the Homeric poem. According to Owen and Goodspeed's *Homeric Vocabularies*, the word *ἰχθῦς* is found between ten and twenty-five times. The exact figure I am ignorant of. We also have fairly numerous allusions to net-fishing and at least six to fishing with the rod (*Il.* 16.406-409, 24.79-82; *Od.* 4.368, 10.124, 12.251-255, 330). Some of these latter allusions merely mention the piscatorial art; the others seem to refer specifically to deep-sea fishing.

The fish thus caught must have been eaten. Just why the heroes slight this edible seems very difficult to explain. Can it be that we have here a survival of the primitive idea found in many tribes that the king must, so far as possible, sequester himself from marine influences (compare Frazer, *Taboo*, etc., 9 f.)? It is conceivable that the 'Zeus-born Kings' of Homer would thus, by tradition, have a different attitude towards fish from that displayed by the common herd.

ALLEGHENY COLLEGE,
MEADVILLE, PA.

A. D. FRASER

REVIEWS

The Art of Transition in Plato. By Grace Hadley Billings. University of Chicago Dissertation (1920). Pp. 104.

This dissertation presents the art of transition in Plato from three different points of view. Chapter I, Main Transitions (4-52), deals with the transition from one main division of a dialogue to another, and resolves itself into a description of the logical framework of the dialogue. After discussing the transitions from the introduction to the main body of the dialogue, and from the latter to the conclusion, the author illustrates Plato's method by brief analyses of the connection of the thought in the *Laches*, the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedrus*, and the *Meno*, and by detailed analyses of the *Phaedo*, the *Theaetetus*, the *Philebus*, the *Republic*, and the *Laws*. This leads incidentally to a discussion, which might well have been more extended, of the unity of the *Republic*, and of the *Philebus*. Chapter II, Minor Conventional Forms of Transition (53-70), deals with Plato's use of conventional transitional formulas, such as e.g. a brief formula of command (*οὐκ ὀφείκει δὲ καὶ τόδε, ἀλλὰ πάλιν εἰπεῖν ἐξ ἀρχῆς*), or a prothetic statement of intention, as the myth in the *Protagoras* is introduced by *δοκεῖτοί νυν μοι, ἔφη, χαρίεστερον εἶναι μῦθον ὑμῖν λέγειν*